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SIPDIS

TREASURY FOR OASIA - A DEMOPULOS
CPA FOR TRENT, WILLIS, WAYNE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [EFIN](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: Jordan-Iraq Aviation Issues Reviewed

REF: Amman 05889

11. (SBU) Summary. The Jordanian Transportation Minister told CPA transportation advisors that Jordan wishes to cooperate in rebuilding the Iraqi aviation sector. Jordan is ready to provide training to Iraqi CAA and airline employees and to work with CPA to return or dispose of Iraqi aircraft in Jordan per UN Security Council Resolution 1483. The Jordanians encouraged an early visit to Amman by Iraq's transportation minister, which could be the next step in moving cooperation forward. End Summary.

12. (SBU) CPA Senior Advisor to the Transportation Ministry Darrell Trent reviewed Iraq-Jordan aviation issues with Jordanian Aviation Minister Nader Dhahabi September 25 in Amman. Accompanying Trent were CPA advisors Frank Willis, Rob Wayne and Chris Walker, and Embassy econoffs. Dhahabi was joined by Secretary General Alaa Batainah, Civil Aviation Director Hanna Najjar, and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official.

Training for Iraqis

13. (SBU) Dhahabi opened the meeting by warmly welcoming Trent and team and expressing readiness to be helpful in any way. He noted that the Jordanian CAA's Queen Noor Technical College would begin offering training to 29 Iraqi air traffic controllers on October 4, and hoped that this was just the beginning of a long-term relationship between the Jordanian and Iraqi CAA's. The minister said that the CAA was also ready to train Iraqi Airways employees as soon as the airline was ready. He said that in both cases there was much work to be done, since Iraqi knowledge of the international civil aviation world was basically frozen at its 1990 level.

Iraqi Airways Planes in Jordan

14. (SBU) In response to Trent's question, Dhahabi said Iraqi Airways airplanes that have been in Jordan since 1991 were not airworthy (see ref). The planes had been sitting on the tarmac unprotected for more than ten years and no effort had been made to preserve engines or other critical systems. Jordan did not have maintenance records. The minister estimated that the cost of a "D check" overhaul to make the aircraft airworthy would cost more than it would to buy aircraft of similar age and model on the market. He thought it could cost up to \$7 million per airplane to make them airworthy, while planes on the market with clear histories and maintenance records would cost less than half that amount.

15. (SBU) Trent said that these were important points, but that the fate of the airplanes was also a matter of national pride in Iraq. He said he had promised his Iraqi colleagues that he would look in detail at all the options before a decision was made. The Minister offered the assistance of Royal Jordanian Airlines and the JORAMCO aircraft maintenance company in conducting an objective technical assessment of the airplanes. Boeing or Pratt and Whitney experts could participate in such an assessment, he said. The Minister also agreed that Trent could physically inspect the aircraft (which Trent and Wayne did later that day).

16. (SBU) The Minister said Jordan was ready to deal with the aircraft as requested by the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) created by UNSCR 1483, noting that it applied to "economic resources" as well as to financial assets. The Minister said the accumulated JD 3-4 million in landing and parking fees would also have to be dealt with. He suggested that this could be handled "politically," with the claim being reduced or dropped if requested by the Iraqi authorities. The Minister used this point as an opportunity to extend an invitation to the Iraqi transportation minister. He said that Jordan would be pleased to publicize such a visit and demonstrate that Iraqis were playing an important role in

their own affairs.

17. (SBU) As for the Falcon-20 executive jet currently parked at Amman's Marka Airport, the Minister said Jordan was ready to turn the plane over to the DFI once its owner had been determined to be the Iraqi government or an entity operating on behalf of the Iraqi government per UNSCR 1483. The Minister said it was his understanding that the plane had been used to transport senior Iraqi officials, but that a legal demonstration of GOI ownership was necessary before Jordan could turn it over. Asked by Trent, Dhahabi said he had no information about the whereabouts of two long missing Iraqi air force Falcon-20 jets.

Jordanian-Iraqi Transport Companies

18. (SBU) Dhahabi raised the case of the Iraq-Jordan land transport company, which is 50% Iraqi government owned, and the joint maritime company that is 1/3 Iraqi government owned. The Minister of Finance was in charge of determining how these financial assets should be treated. The government had established a temporary committee to oversee the ongoing business of these firms in the place of their former boards of directors. The General Manager of one of the companies had been dismissed because the GOJ committee was not confident he was acting in the best interest of the company. As in the case of the airplanes, the Minister said he understood that these assets should eventually be turned over to the DFI.

Royal Jordanian Operations to Iraq

19. (SBU) Trent and Willis expressed appreciation for the cooperation offered by Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ), particularly the airline's help in providing charter service between Amman and Baghdad for CPA officials and others traveling on CPA business. The Minister said he hoped RJ would be "the first" to fly regular flights to Baghdad and Basra whenever Iraq was ready to take that step. In the meantime, he said there should be some clarification in procedures for authorizing special flights into Iraq. He suggested that there should be one Iraqi focal point that provided official permission for such flights, observing that a decision by the Centcom Regional Air Mobility Command (RAMC) in Doha to provide a slot did not constitute approval for a flight. This ambiguity had sometimes created confusion when requests were made to Jordan's CAA to approve specific flight requests. Trent said he would clarify the situation.

Comment

10. (SBU) The Jordanians are clearly interested in developing a long-term aviation relationship with Iraq, and are ready to provide training and other help as an investment toward that end. They are anxious to dispose of Iraqi aircraft in Jordan, but will want to be assured that they do so in complete conformity with UNSCR 1483. In the case of the Falcon-50, this means they will need evidence of Iraqi ownership or a request from the government of registration (Switzerland) before turning the aircraft over. Although the Jordanians are ready to cooperate fully with CPA and Iraqi ministries, it is politically easier for them to do so when requests come to them directly from Iraqi officials. Thus, an early visit to Amman by the Iraqi Transportation Minister could help move these issues along.

GNEHM